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RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 7031
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RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH 7842
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 1944
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 5271
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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/R/MR:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, AZAIBACK, AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA MDAVIDSON
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
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E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KMDR](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [OPRC](#) [SY](#)

SUBJECT: Syria/Iraq, US Arms Shipments, Lebanon, Palestinian
Territories, Peace Process (8/8)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers on August 8 reported Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal al-Miqdad's meeting on August 7 with Iraqi Foreign Ministry Deputy Labid Abbawi on bilateral relations between Syria and Iraq and means of developing them in all different domains. During the meeting, both sides exchanged viewpoints on the latest developments in Iraq. Al-Miqdad and Abbawi stressed the importance of work to achieve national reconciliation among the Iraqi people in order to realize stability in Iraq, preserve its territorial unity and guarantee the withdrawal of the foreign forces from it.

Independent al-Watan reported that US officials will attend as observers the two-day security border meeting in Damascus today that emerged from the Sharm el-Sheikh conference on Iraq last May and in the wake of Secretary Rice's meeting with Syrian FM Mouallem.

Papers also featured an analysis published by Italian Newspaper "La Repubblica" on August 7 strongly criticizing the US Administration weapons deals to Israel and the region, saying that this step constitutes an indication of Washington's failure in the Middle East. The analysis said that the increasing of US arms shipments to the region increase dangers resulting from US failure in Iraq. The paper stressed that more armament deals in the region will increase instability in the Middle East, adding that the US deals are within the framework of Washington's scheme to establish the Greater Middle East.

End of summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Deputy Foreign Minister Faisal al-Miqdad discusses developments in Iraq with Iraqi Foreign Ministry Deputy Labid Abbawi. Emphasis is laid on national reconciliation to maintain Iraq's national unity and secure evacuation of occupation troops" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 8/8)

"In the attendance of American observers; meeting of the Security Committee for Coordination and Cooperation on Iraq convenes today in Damascus" (Independent al-Watan, 8/8)

"Al-Maliki in Ankara: A security document and two protocols on oil

and electricity cooperation. The Iraqi List announces its participation in the government" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 8/8)

"A judicial organization: The number of Iraqi refugees in Syria has reached two million refugees" (Independent al-Watan, 8/8)

"Contacts over Israeli prisoner Shalit resume between Israel and Hamas. Palestinian PM Hanieh proposes to give up his position in exchange for national reconciliation" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 8/8)

"An Israeli denies contacts with Hamas over Shalit" (Independent al-Watan, 8/8)

"The US provides the Lebanese army with military vehicles. A Lebanese division enhances call for early elections" (Independent al-Watan, 8/8)

"Lahoud encourages national unity. Berri denounces the governing team's racist rhetoric. Al-Tayyar al-Hurr: Washington intervened in the Lebanese by-elections" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 8/8)

"British author Robert Fisk and Nicholas Blanford [correspondent of British daily 'The Thames']: Al-Maten by-elections are a blow to the US supported governing team" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 8/8)

13. Editorial Block Quotes:

"Mirage of Peace"

Omar Jaftali, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (8/8): "The US Administration is now trying to compensate for its miserable failure in Iraq by advancing a vague peace process between Israel and moderate Arabs.... The US Administration has no other concern than pleasing Israel...."

"Why does the US divide Arabs into moderates and non-moderates if it intends to cement a just and comprehensive peace in the region...?"

"We do not want to anticipate things. The date of the fall meeting is approaching, but facts and information show that the Bush administration intends only to strengthen American alliances in the region and finish with the tough birth pangs of the new Middle East...."

"When They Distribute Failure"

Ali Qasim, a commentator in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (8/8): "US Defense Secretary Robert Gates, warned that the United States might revise its strategy in Iraq in light of the political failures in that country. In his warning Gates ignored the role that his country is playing as an occupation power hindering any political solution...."

"The suspicious role the United States is playing in Iraq is not confined only to obstruction, but it goes beyond that to participation in fanning the flames of the ethnic and sectarian conflict to a point that threatens Iraq's entity, existence, and unity...."

"Americans are trying to blame Iraqis and others for the failure in Iraq, disregarding the occupation as the main and only reason for all the troubles in Iraq and the gravest threat to the country...."

"This American attempt will only confirm the failure more than deny it, and deepen the crisis more than ease it.... The solution lies in setting a timetable for the American withdrawal from Iraq...."

"Unlimited Lies"

Dr Ibrahim Darraji, a commentator in independent al-Watan, wrote (8/8): "Lebanese leaders Amin al-Jumayyil and Samir Ja'ja fabricated lies particularly with regard to Syria, before and after the Al-Matn by-elections....

"The problem with these lies is that they seek to create a 'Syriaphobia' in Lebanon; in other words, they seek to entrench a racist anti-Syria concept among the coming generations. They also forge history, distort reality, and threaten a dangerous future...."

Corbin